

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 890
By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the disproportionate confinement of minorities in the juvenile justice system.

WHEREAS, the confinement of juveniles, while perhaps a necessary part of creating a just society, is a serious punishment which should be delivered only with the greatest amount of consideration and never as a first option; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, 20% of the State's 12-17 year-old population was comprised of African-Americans; however, African-Americans accounted for 70% of the juveniles held in Tennessee's secure detention centers throughout that year; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2003, African-American children accounted for 21.4% of the State's juvenile population, 38% of Tennessee's delinquent population as recorded by the Department of Children's Services, and yet accounted for nearly 46% of the population of the State's Youth Development Centers; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that there is hereby created a special joint committee to study whether there exists an overrepresentation of minorities in confinement within Tennessee's juvenile justice system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vicechair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundred Fourth General Assembly no later than February 5, 2005, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.